

Testimony in Support of HB 6425 and SB 1035

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In 1993, I lost my sister-in-law in a brutal rape and murder. Having survived this tragedy, I yearn for a society that puts more emphasis on helping the survivors and their families. Don't get me wrong, I feel no sympathy for murderers and believe they have sacrificed the right to live freely in our society for the rest of their life. These individuals deserve to live out their days incarcerated in the very criminal population they themselves helped to create. I feel the death penalty distorts what is really important and unfortunately this comes at a cost to survivors.

The death penalty in Connecticut offers a false promise to victims' family members and delivers decades of additional pain. In nearly the last half century, Connecticut has only executed one person and he voluntarily gave up his appeals. It still took 18 years after his conviction to execute him. Others have been on death row for over two decades.

While no death sentences are actually carried out, families suffer through years of appeals where the details of the crime are replayed in the press over and over again. The defendant becomes a celebrity in death penalty cases while victims are forgotten. The press does not cover the shorter appeal process for those who receive life without parole.

This broken and inefficient system, which rarely carries out its goals, actually costs more than life without release. It's not just the money. If the state and society want to spend 20 years discussing a crime, shouldn't that time and energy be spent helping the survivors? In these tight economic times, the services available for murder victims' family members are insufficient. We should be ashamed to spend extra money on the mere idea of an execution.

I cannot support the death penalty because the system does not allow a means to an end. There is no closure for the families of murders victims. Executing a life does not replace the life taken. Additionally, the decades of delay on death row only add to the tragic sorrow and emotional torment for the victim's families. This system is not about my needs or the needs of so many murder victims' survivors. The death penalty hurts us when we're most vulnerable, and this is just wrong.

I urge you to vote to repeal the death penalty in Connecticut.